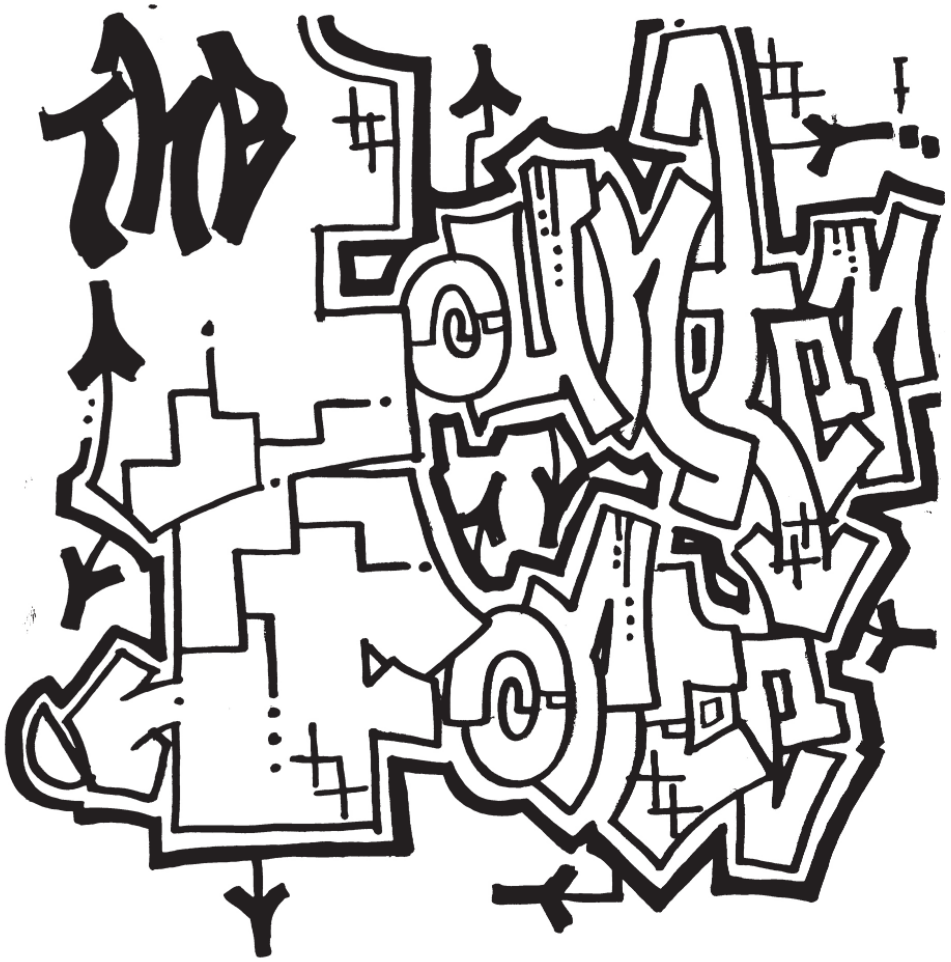
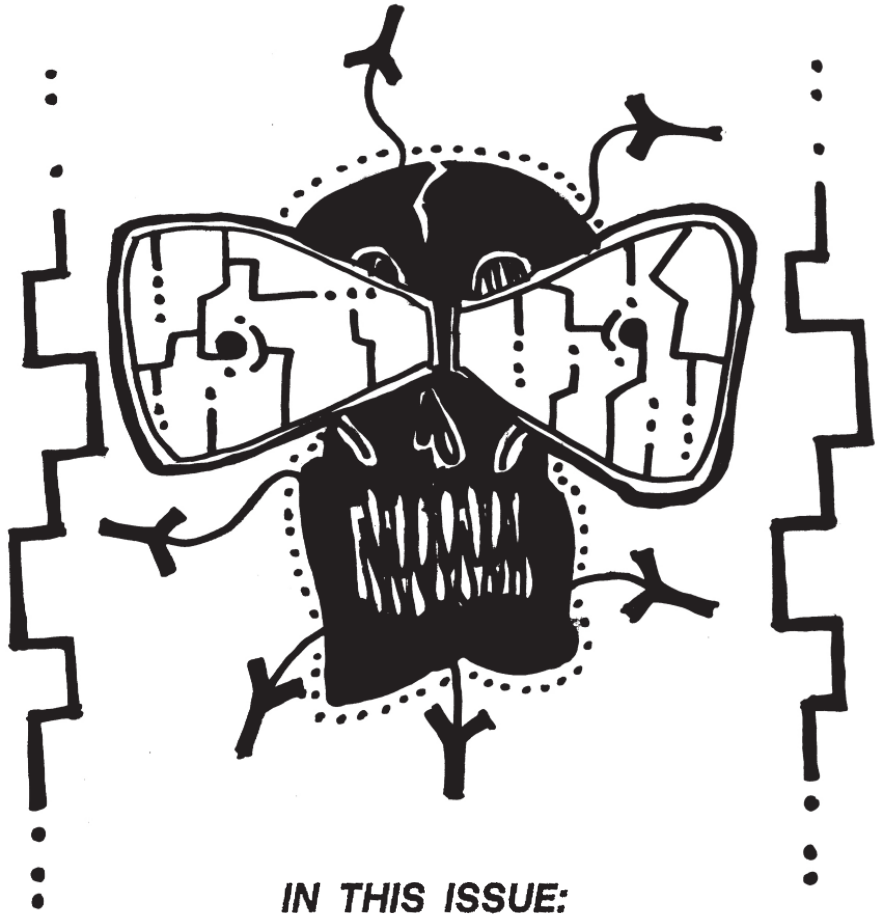


Issue #3 – October 2024

THE COUNTERFORCE

hardcore punk underground



IN THIS ISSUE:

SQUAT SHOWS IN NYC, REPORTBACKS FROM SKULL FEST, CY FEST, FUSION FEST, AND TOTAL NADA U.S. TOUR, REVIEWS, AND MORE

What is this? **The Counterforce** is an initiative to push back against the corporate capture of hardcore punk. Social media apps and streaming platforms dominate how we interact online, including how we share and distribute our music and ideas. The corporations that run these platforms extract massive profits from us, which they use to fund and facilitate exploitation, war, and genocide. Meanwhile, our independent and underground alternatives have eroded.

The goal of The Counterforce is to strengthen and grow the hardcore punk underground that still exists outside of this corporate capture. Rather than funnel punk into profit-driven walled gardens, we want to foment and encourage a culture that is autonomous and independent. This is not just a nostalgic, backward-facing project—we want to explore new alternatives for spreading hardcore punk online and offline.

You are reading issue #3 of the print version of The Counterforce.

Find the files to print and distribute this zine (and others like it) yourself online at **https://the-counterforce.org**

There, you will also find the other arms of The Counterforce:

A WEB ZINE

This site publishes reviews, letters, scene reports, profiles/interviews, rants, and how-to guides, all with an emphasis on projects that try to exist outside of corporate platforms.

In part, we hope this will encourage human-driven curation, recommendation, and discovery. Find out about new bands that aren't on the streaming sites. Submit a review of your own band. Compile a scene report or show review and send it in. We also publish articles and DIY how-to guides to help empower other punks to build and participate in a scene that's less centered around evil apps.

All this is published online, but also compiled into regular print zine editions to bring paper back to the punk show (like the version you are reading now).

A DIRECTORY OF SIMILARLY ALIGNED PROJECTS

The Internet is breaking down. Websites outside of a handful of apps have slowly disappeared, and the ones that are still out there are harder and harder to find.

The Counterforce provides a directory of these websites: blogs, archives, distros, zines, radio shows and podcasts... anywhere hardcore punk can be found online (and maybe offline too!).

A PLACE TO EXPERIMENT WITH AND LEARN ABOUT ALTERNATIVES

It's easy to shit on the corporate social media and streaming platforms, but what other options are there? There are alternatives and we try them out—public online show calendars, open-source social media, self-hosted music sharing—and encourage other punks to join us.

THE COUNTERFORCE IS A DISTRIBUTED AND COMMUNITY PROJECT

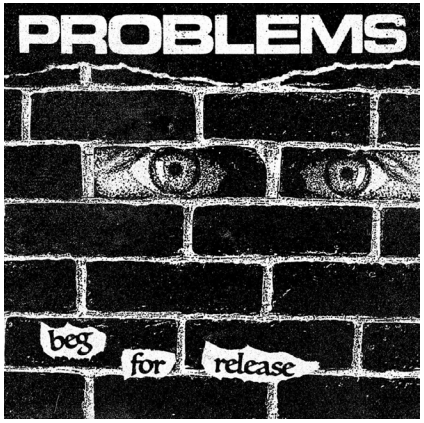
Get in touch if you want to submit!

Scene reports, interviews/profiles, zine/show/record reviews, how to guides. All pitches are welcome. Submission does not guarantee publication.

Web: https://the-counterforce.org
E-mail: the-counterforce@riseup.net
Mastodon: @The_Counterforce@kolektiva.social

PRINT THIS ZINE

This zine is available on our website as a PDF you can print out and distribute yourself, with more coming soon.

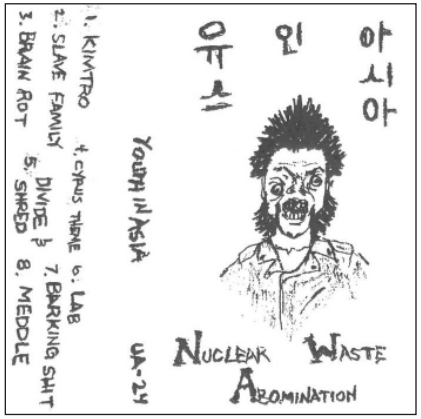


PROBLEMS – Beg For Release

This new EP came out of nowhere and was a good surprise. Unrelenting Hardcore of the punk variety out of Norway, by longtime students of the game who cut their teeth in amazing bands such as DEATH IS NOT GLAMOROUS, OKKULTOKRATI, BLOOD SUCKERS, URBANOIA... This is no frills, in your face Hardcore. Equal parts POISON IDEA and NEGATIVE FX, that would play nicely with most current releases on Quality Control Records. I would describe the vocals as ugly and nasty if the band wasn't fronted by the ultimate European heartthrob. The title track starts with the vocalist screaming "SPOILER ALERT: YOU'RE GONNA DIE!!!!". What more do you want?

Released by Adult Crash Records. Listen here: https://fuckproblems.bandcamp.com/album/beg-for-release

—Nab



YOUTH IN ASIA – Nuclear Waste Abomination

I have been sitting on this review for a while but have been, for whatever reason, repeatedly putting off finishing it (I'd like to say it's because I've been too busy, but that is a shit excuse retrospectively). Alas, today I called in sick to work, which felt like the perfect time to focus on this review instead of more pressing important things I should actually be doing. I have now finally gotten my lazy ass to click the upload and save button to this website, finally leading me four months later to plug in the relatively vernal outfit: YOUTH IN ASIA.

YOUTH IN ASIA's 2024 release, Nuclear Waste Abomination, on Milwaukee's Unlawful Assembly, is recommended for all who love blown-out hardcore punk—which I'm assuming many people who read The Counterforce do! The lyrics are sung in Korean and are deep and growly ala DOOM (or a more contemporary comparison being VIDEO FILTH) but depart from being anything I would describe as crust. Instead, it seems to be influenced by classic American hardcore and Japanese punk.

I am not a drummer, so my knowledge is only limited to the half-ass attempts I've made over the past ten years to learn drums, but for lack of a better word, they just fucking rip. The speed and precision hold the demo together in a way that aids in how much the vocals work to demolish precision. I always appreciate punk when it works to create perfection and chaos at the same time: An arduous process that YOUTH IN ASIA succeeds at.

YOUTH IN ASIA is from the desolate ass lands of Indiana, particularly central and southern Indiana. Indiana is one of the worst states in objectively the worst country in the world. Indiana is not pretty, and if you have any concerns about good educational policies, reproductive rights, or LGBT care, then I would most certainly not recommend you move here. I can't say there is much to visit and see here. Nonetheless, some enthusiastic youth are making some solid punk that brings just a bit of pride to that state.

FFO: YDI, ICD10, The Sentenced

Released on Unlawful Assembly, listen here: https://unlawfulassembly.bandcamp.com/album/youth-in-asia-nuclear-waste-abomination

—Crash JT

A DIGITAL ZINE DISTRO

Major punk fanzines of the past fell victim to the rising costs of printing and shipping. We publish printable PDFs of our zines online for anyone to print and distribute themselves, and encourage other zinesters to submit their own.

What if instead of shipping zines around the world, any punk anywhere could log on, download some PDFs and scam some copies to have a fully stocked, PWYC zine distro at the next show? Print-It-Yourself!

A HARD LINE AGAINST CONTRIBUTING TO FURTHER CORPORATE CAPTURE OF OUR SUBCULTURE

– No links to Instagram, Spotify, Linktree, Discord, or other corporate platforms.
– No coverage of releases that are on major labels, or only available digitally on corporate streaming platforms.
– Always independent and not-for-profit.

For expanding the hardcore punk mutual aid autonomous zone.
For facilitating human curation and recommendation.
For hardcore punk with context and politics.

Against celebrity, ladder climbers, clout chasers and influencers.
Against the algorithmic flattening of our subculture.
Against the capitalist death machine and the corporate capture of hardcore punk.

Contributors to this issue: Alex M., Corn, Crash JT, Crimethinc. Ex-Workers Collective, Ioc, Martin Force, Misery, Nab, Slim. Cover by Slim. Layout by Taylor Joy.

Contact:
E-mail: the-counterforce@riseup.net
Mastodon: @The_Counterforce@kolektiva.social

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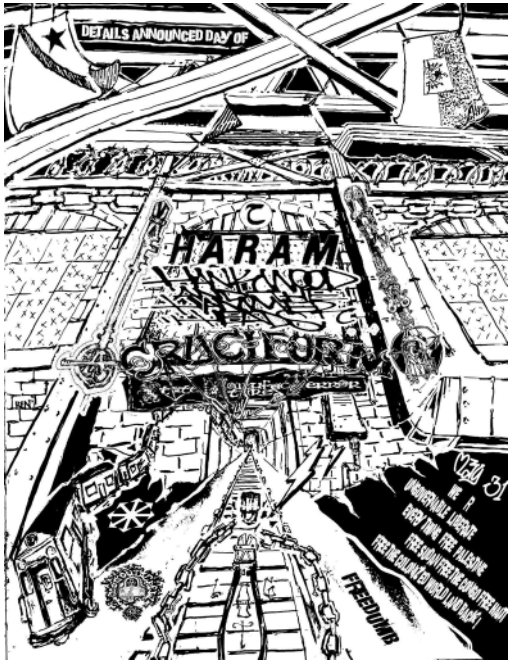
SCENE REPORT ON SQUATTING IN RELATION TO THE NYC PUNK SCENE 2024

by loc

squatted shows and diy shows have been an essential part of the history of punk in "so called" nyc. for years there have been consistent diy spots that have been holding up the scene. unfortunately in these last few years most of those places have been stripped away from us. in a post-covid lockdown dystopia of hyper inflation, resulting in a housing crisis, diy spots are the front lines of demolition for gentrification/yuppie condos and businesses nobody asked for or can even afford. landlords work hand-in-hand with the state to use surveillance culture to catch diy spots and we have the dry-snitching that is instagram show photography accompanying geotags to thank for that.

december of 2023 marked the first squatted show that set the tone for what is being considered a "reclamation series" of squatted shows.

that show was in an abandoned commercial space somewhere in manhattan, surrounded by highend restaurants and bars that were built for yuppie gentrifiers. there is something eerily disturbing about there being blocks of abandoned buildings rotting while people sleep on the streets. there was no location information on the flyer but a small quote which i think encapsulates where we were pretty well: "they build a playground for the rich on open graves of the poor." i'd also like to note that this was a benefit show for a local squat and took place during the peak of a, luckily, failed attempt at a violent forced eviction by zionist developers.



that show kickstarted a series of shows that have taken place on bridges, abandoned sites, active construction sites, and even active railroad tunnels often being overlooked by the city's iconic skyline, keeping the city that never sleeps awake. these shows have been scouted, backlined, and booked by a large crew of people that go by the name "logout".

none of the flyers include the location of the show and people are encouraged to go hunt for large screenprinted show flyers that are wheatpasted around the city which include the coordinates

ONE TRACK MIND – Demo 2024

I love getting caught off guard by that fast intro that breaks into a super cool rocking/lead part, setting the tone here for unconventional song structures in the often boring genre that is youth-crew adjacent Hardcore. For the uninitiated, the term "democore" came from the 2010s boom of willfully amateurish bands who swore by third-rate/obscure late 80's NYHC (see the defunct Moshers Delight Records). Admittedly late to the party, ONE TRACK MIND from Montreal carves their name alongside that wave, but doesn't sweat the production, doing justice (no pun intended) to these really well-written songs. The very laid-back vocals are an original touch and don't take away from the energy of the music. They lean hard on melodies and that's probably their strongest suit; fingers crossed that's the direction the next release is gonna go in. If you told me this band was a mix of early TURNING POINT meets SUPERTOUCH on Lockin Out, I wouldn't be disappointed by the result.

Released on cassette by Poison Heart Records. Listen here: https://onetrackmindhc.bandcamp.com/album/demo

—Nab

PLACID — Aller Jamais Retour EP

Weirdo Hardcore-punk on the eggier side of things that combines chorus-drenched noisy guitar and fast frantic drumming; but what made me fall in love with them are the super snarky vocals. Some songs are in English and others are in French (I believe the singer is from Luxembourg and the band is based in Germany). The lyrics are quite vile but the vocal delivery has a candid touch that makes the songs all the more catchier. It's as no-bullshit as it gets and the drums are barrelling through the noise. There's no mosh parts per se but definitely moments that will make people run into each other like maniacs in the pit. I described this as putting EXIT ORDER, BIB and LITIGE in a blender, but they definitely have their own thing going on.

Released by STTW Records. Listen here: https://sttwrecords.bandcamp.com/album/aller-jamais-retour

—Nab

SUBMIT YOUR REVIEWS OF NEW RELEASES: THE-COUNTERFORCE@RISEUP.NET OR AT THE-COUNTERFORCE.ORG/CONTACT-SUBMIT

FETUS breakdowns, FATAL REALM delivers a great take on death metal. The demo is 5 songs in 9 minutes. The whole demo is basically all mosh parts while still being very much a death metal demo. Nonstop riffs. Makes your brain feel like the drawing on the artwork. Also, I keep seeing people online use the term "spinkick death metal" to describe death metal bands that are influenced by hardcore or vice versa and I think it's time that everyone accepts what the genre really is...it's deathcore.

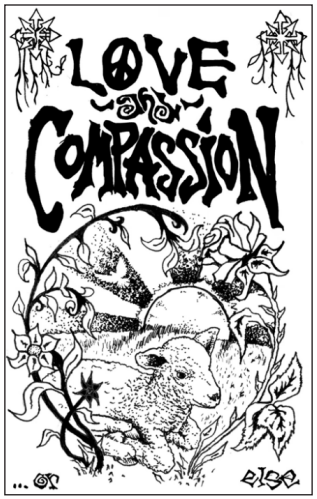
Self-released. Listen here: https://fatalrealm.bandcamp.com/album/demo

—Alex M.

HELLSCAPE – S/T

HELLSCAPE ended up on my radar due to this 7" being released by Advanced Perspective, a label that I feel consistently puts out really good shit and to no surprise, this is extremely good shit. The band cites some of their influences as CHRISTIAN DEATH and VOODOO CHURCH which is pretty obvious as soon as you listen to the first song. HELLSCAPE takes their goth and deathrock influences and uses them to make totally ripping hardcore punk. It's fast, loud, and fucking pissed. Deathrock with mosh parts. The breakdown on the song Intravenous is so hard. It's really great stuff. The whole EP is like 10 minutes long, so you know it rips.

Released on Advanced Perspective. Listen here: https://advancedperspective.bandcamp.com/album/hellscape



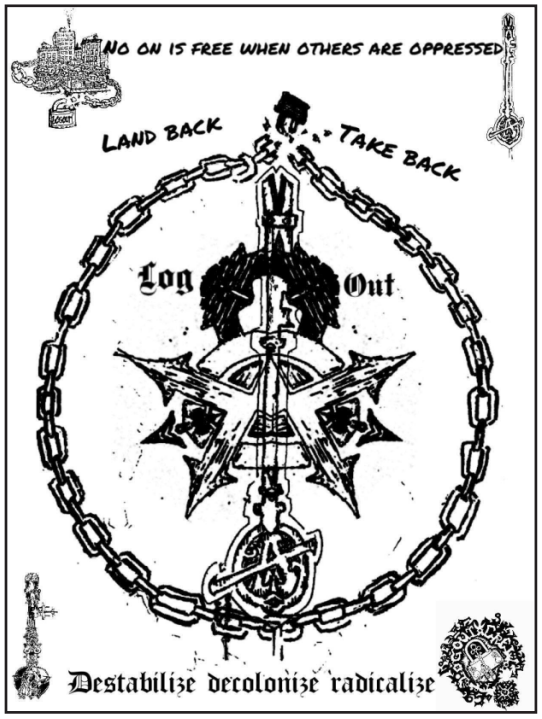
—Alex M.

LOVE AND COMPASSION — ...Or Else

NYC's beloved new crust band. My take is that this is metalcore disguised as crust. For fans of MORNING AGAIN, CHOKEHOLD and NAUSEA. Maybe I selfishly read it this way because I am always looking for that perfect crossover of two things I love, crust and breakdown 90s metalcore. Crust and metalcore are just closer than you think but they really belong together. Love/Compassion Crust/Core. Political lyrics to make you angry over heavy chugs to hype you up. There's even a blink-and-you'll-miss-it appearance of the riff from "Firestorm". Spoken word sections. Even the tape title "...or else" sounds like a mosh call. They're probably intentionally going for a lo-fi straight-to-tape recording quality but to me it just sounds like a CD put out by in 1997 by a band from Florida. Maybe they are adding a 2nd guitar, which is a good call. The next recording will be h e a v y. I also love the tastefully deployed flanger.

On on cassette from Peace of Mind https://peaceofmindinatroubledworld.nyc/

—Martin Force



of the show location. this is all in a grand effort to keep these locations offline so the internet doesn't do what it's best known for: blowing up the spot.

hence the name logout*.

we're lucky to live in a grandiose, loud city that is filled with nooks and crannies that are being left to rot. i only say lucky because we see those places and our eyes light up knowing at least for one night we can bring life back into it. the benefits of being in a city this rambunctious is that we make it happen right under their noses. they don't want us having these spaces to let out our anger and speak loudly on the atrocities the country we live in is perpetuating around the world.

reclaiming spaces that are being left to rot by those pushing us out feels necessary in today's climate. not only are we pushing the boundaries of autonomy in a disruptive way but we are also raising funds and awareness about the imperialistic horrors being committed across the globe, including our own neighborhoods such as the heavy-handed police interventions on migrant vendors and barrios.

*in other fun anti-internet news: logout is making a newspaper which will include things like comics, show reviews, tape releases, future gigs, strictly offline photographs from diy shows and all the fun local news a newspaper should provide. unfortunately, this newspaper can only be attained by coming to new york city! hope to see you soon.

FUSION FESTIVAL XXV SCENE REPORT

By Crimethinc. Ex-Workers Collective

A few legendary, long-running, DIY festivals dominate the summer tour circuit for hardcore punk in Europe: K-Town Hardcore Fest in Copenhagen, Fluff Festival outside of Prague, and Monteparadiso in Croatia. However, there is one towering midsummer festival that punks often overlook despite its grandeur—Fusion Festival in Lärz, Germany, near Berlin and Hamburg. With an attendance of 70,000 and a crew of 10,000 Fusion is Germany's largest techno festival, so it's understandable why touring bands might not understand it as a thriving mutant underground for pedal-to-the-metal rock'n'roll. However—for any freedom-loving, fist-pumping, snotty rotting pogo punker—this is a mistake. Bands: by hook or by crook, get booked at Fusion. Here's why...

EVERYTHING ANTIFASCIST

The shortest way to describe Fusion Festival is Burning Man if everything hippie about Burning Man was antifascist instead. The grounds are a century-old airport developed by the Nazis before its capture by the Soviet Red Army. A plurality of the dancefloors are old airplane hangars with stages built inside and camouflagingly terraformed as hills, which you can climb for beautiful vistas of the festival lights and the sunset. The official program lists just over 40 stages, but there are even more not listed, including a nudist beach (with DJs, a bar, and food) next to a canal—not to be mistaken with the swimming lake where everyone is also nude. All in all I'd say there's probably 100 different "worlds" you can fall into... but it's truly endless. There's always more. There are pop-up arenas with avant garde circuses, a theater for plays and another for films (which is a great place to snag a nap when it's too rainy or bright outside), a roller-skating rink, a few hidden saunas, fair games like slingshotting iron arrows at revolving dishware, a million cool couches and cushions and swings and rocking-horses (except they're ostriches) to sit on, screen-it-yourself stations with patches and stickers and pins and anarchist literature, a million kinds of trippy vibey areas from enchanted psychedelic forests to dystopian concrete trash wasteland, there's a childcare area with programming so developed that it should more properly be described as a weeklong alternative youth summer camp, and just much *much much* more. My favorite anarchist merch distro is an anti-border collective that provides mutual aid to migrants stuck in the kilometer-wide no-mans-land between the Polish and Belarus borders.

A demonstration within Fusion Festival in solidarity with antifascist political prisoner Maja

https://budapest-solidarity.net

'record soon on Iron Lung' so I hope we get to hear more. It's hardcore punk with a bit of the weird Oregon/Washington twist: a little something on the guitar, not just typical raw punk, but some weird guitar effect nerdery that reminds me of NASTI. A subtle addition but really distinguishes it. Everyone in this band probably has a pedalboard, but isn't a tool. The drumming isn't just stock beats. Some rhythmic rolling toms and beats, and of course a solid d-beat when needed. The vocals are angry and shouted with echo and delay. No lyrics included, but I get the sense there is a political angle here. If i didn't know I would guess ATOMIC PREY are from somewhere in the PNW and indeed that are based in Portland. It all makes sense. Looking forward to the full release and hope to see this band soon.

This recording isn't online, but you can check out some live output from ATOMIC PREY on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uw7_fBOYP2o

—Martin Force

EXTENSIVE SLAUGHTER – A FATED DEMISE

Crasher crust trio EXTENSIVE SLAUGHTER from Vancouver certainly live up to their name on this latest release. Pummeling drums, chainsaw riffs and guttural vocals wash over 5 tracks clocking in just over 9 minutes, truly the perfect length to leave your ears ringing for more. There isn't a moment to catch your breath on any of these tracks, just the way it should be! The final track "Extensive Slaughter" features additional vocals à la legends like DISRUPT and NAUSEA, a trend I hope they pursue on further releases. I'm not a guitar person at all, but the select solos add that extra bit of flair that rips through the tracks, adding another crunchy layer to this d-beat delight.

I was fortunate enough to catch EXTENSIVE SLAUGHTER in Montreal recently, watching the drummer grin ear to ear while laying waste to the kit has be one of my top show highlights of 2024. Go see this band if you get the chance!

And if you can't see them, grab a copy of the cassette put out by the legendary Sore Mind label. Wonderfully designed, with a print of the album art on the cassette, lyrics on the j-card (love to see it!), a photo of the band and a call to arms that reads:

"to support indigenous peoples worldwide in their fight for freedom, the rest of humanity must recognize their complicity in oppression and fight against genocidal, colonial states and their repression of the rightful stewards of the land, from coast Salish territories to Palestine, we need nothing less than the total destruction of colonial rules to call this world free"

Listen to the EP here: https://extensiveslaughter.bandcamp.com/album/a-fated-demise

Purchase the tape at: https://www.soremind.com/product/extensive-slaughter-a-fated-demise-cassette

—Misery

FATAL REALM – Demo

FATAL REALM straight up restored my faith in hardcore guys doing death metal. In a world that is now overrun by everyone trying to be the next TORTURE and bands stealing DYING

REVIEWS

AMERICAN CULTURE – Hey Brother It's Been a While

You don't need to be super plugged in to realize that Denver, Colorado has been having a moment in the last few years. A lot of it revolves around the label Convulse Records (GEL, MSPAINT, MILITARIE GUN...) and that scene birthed some awesome bands such as PUBLIC OPINION, DIRECT THREAT, CANDY APPLE and now AMERICAN CULTURE.

The album opens with local ambient-pop artist MIDWIFE, whose ethereal vocals are unmistakable, featured prominently on the song. A surprising choice and not her only appearance on the record. Anything that's outside the box in Punk is often referred to as ambitious or pompous (I gave up trying to defend FUCKED UP), and this record doesn't feel like that, but is definitely taking you in unexpected places. While rooted in Punk, AMERICAN CULTURE takes musical cues from lower-tiered Britpop (I love THE BOO RADLEYS personally) and 70's powerpop. The latter I'm not as well-versed in but I could definitely see scrawny dudes in button-up shirts playing these riffs on weirdly-shaped guitars with much less gusto. Instead, the band brings sort of a slacker vibe thanks to the storytelling-like delivery of the vocals. And Frankly, the songs have no business being this good. The main point of reference for me would be a sobered-up THE STONE ROSES, but I feel like anybody into current bands like YOUNG GUV or HOTLINE TNT could easily get into this record. Perfect driving music in my opinion.

I haven't dived into the concept of the record too much but it seems to revolve around one of the members having some sort of breakdown, going off the grid; and how his sudden disappearance and later resurfacing impacted his life and the people around him.

Released on Convulse Records. Listen here: https://convulserecords.bandcamp.com/album/hey-brother-its-been-a-while

—Nab

ATOMIC PREY — Spring Promo 2024

This tape was given to me at Latino Punk Fest by someone who had heard of The Counterforce and was looking for a copy (sorry I was out!). It's a two song promo but I was told

All the food is vegetarian, much of it is vegan. More importantly, the food is SO GOOD. Like, some of the best ever, no shit. If you work or play the festival, it's free. Even when it's not free, it's easy to come by. The coffee is supplied by the Zapatistas. Workers, volunteers, and artists can double their money for alcohol.

Throughout the festival grounds enormous murals and banners proclaim the names of antifascist fighters held hostage by the state. Within a matter of days, almost all the surfaces erected at the festival are covered in graffiti proclaiming solidarity with insurrectionary people's movements like Rojava or Standing Rock. Migrant solidarity collectives like Sea-Watch recycle left-behind camping gear for mutual aid purposes. Almost every "crew" hired to work at the festival is from a squat, or collective space, or radical project—making the whole thing a way to finance the autonomous left throughout Germany and much of the rest of Europe. The festival's website describes itself as "holiday communism" (ferienkommunismus), but the sheer magnitude of DIY organized chaos makes Fusion a must-go-to destination for any anarcho-hedonist. ACAB and circle A's everywhere.

Cops are not allowed inside the festival. The security is usually comprised of crews or affinity groups with experience at land occupations or other kinds of police-hostile scenarios. Polizei swarm the exterior of the festival. Much of the wheatpasted posterage you see advertises "clean drivers" who can pilot your car through police controls, because German pigs are allowed to drug test drivers on the spot. You see, one of the main draws of the festival is its open drug use, while miraculously remaining fairly free from mafia pusher bullshit.

Inside the festival, there are awareness and de-escalation teams for conflicts. There's also the festival's own first aid and ambulance team, with special training on drugs and overdoses. A drug awareness tent will test your stuff, explain chemical combinations, supply you with free harm reduction materials, and has a chill-out area if you need to come down with a soft landing. It also has fresh fruit.

Everything lasts from Wednesday afternoon to Monday evening, with round-the-clock music and activity while the festival is on, although there are still small performances and hidden container parties to be found for days after the festival officially ends. Fusion normally takes place the last weekend of June or first weekend of July, just one or two weeks after K-Town.

ROCKIN' & RAVIN'

There are a few reliable spots for rock'n'roll, all of which are relatively close to each other. The three hangar clubs where bands most often play are Triebwerke, Datscha, and Schuhkarton. It's a five-minute walk from any of these hangars to the other, if you don't fall into a random rabbit hole that leads you to some other adventure, which you absolutely should fall into if it presents itself to you. I've caught great acts like THE SUBHUMANS and VICTIMS at Datscha, while Schuhkarton is for truly underground gems like Berlin's ECHOES. Luftschloss is a round theater with risers on the old runway that you can rely on for dark music of all kinds: darkwave and EBM outfits, stoner sludge bands, and after bands it becomes a dark techno war machine. One year I was lucky enough to stumble upon an up-and-coming BOY HARSHER at the 'schloss. The runway outside of Luftschloss looks like a cartoon punk motor dystopia ala the parking lot in Dead End Drive-In. Across the road from Luftschloss is Tubebox, which

usually has techno inside the hangar but there is a “Punk Stage”—that’s its name—outside the hangar next to the bar and the skate bowl. Then there’s Fer A Coudre, the French welder steampunk squatter tent. Usually there are heavy blues, CRAMPS-ish style bands at Fer A Coudre but the only band I caught there this year was the delightfully absurdist rap-punk-noise duo WRONG CHICKEN. There’s also Roter Platz, a regular big ole outdoor festival stage, where years ago I saw the legendary Slime.

This year there was one true champion of the rock and it was 80s deutschpunk legends TOXOPLASMA. They fucking ripped!!!! Heads were banging and chains were clanging in a pit that was as tender as it was turnt up to 11. Smiles all around. All my German friends who recommended TOXOPLASMA also told me to see BÄRCHEN UND DIE MILCHBUBIS. Classic anti-globalization era anarcho-punks ACCIÓN MUTANTE and PETROGRAD also banged out some pogable tunes. New crops EGO and SAUFKNAST played too, who I was keen to see but missed—sometimes you gotta rave instead of rock.

Other punk bands that played: DIE ANSTALT, ELEKTROKOHLE, FINISTERRE, GIF, H.i.T., HOARSE, SHITSHOW, SNÕÕPER, SUCK, THE GLUTS, WEAK TIES

All in all, about as many punk bands play Fusion Festival as play the other big-name DIY punk festivals in Europe, and the bands are about as punk as the other festivals too, but there is a lower concentration of punk overall because the bands are spread out among more stages and genres than those other festivals. The punk subculture at fusion is just one strain within a larger culture of resistance.

Truth be told, I love punk but I just can’t be bothered to run around a festival—especially one with 100 different little worlds where you can always fall into something good—just to hunt down the right band, especially when the schedule always gets pushed back. And, as a punk who also loves techno, Fusion is one of the few times I can rave with cool spikey punks all around. The trancefloor is traditionally the best place to find the spikiest chain punx getting stoopid to really trashy computer rock beep boop bops.

Here’s just a few of the DJs I found that were good, dark, and hard—techno for punk rock tastes: CHARLIE CHEPPERT, NÚRIA, KOLLEKTIV FISCHMARKT

And on the theme of not-punk-but-it-rocked, the Trojan Records living legend HORACE ANDY opened the festival up with an amazing set of soulful, roots reggae and angry old-man anti-police diatribes like, “Me nah like the police in Jamaica! They raid the house, they grab the chalice, they smash the chalice to pieces... No, no no, me nah like them Babylon.”

open. Pedestrians walking by gave me weird looks as I kept an eye out for the pigs. Bill just thought it was hilarious.

In addition to the aforementioned bands, Bill recorded several excellent MASAKARI records and the first ZEGOTA album, not to mention hardcore bands like MISERY INDEX, TERROR, and BROTHER’S KEEPER, and bands that were more on the punk side of the spectrum like NINE SHOCKS TERROR, HELLNATION, and THE AWAKENING.

In the picture, you can see Bill with Dan Young, the member of CATHARSIS who passed away in 1999. They are looking at us from the other side.

Tonight, I’ll be listening to INTEGRITY’s “Vocal Test.” To this day, I can still remember Bill’s voice in my headphones: “All right, let’s try that again.”

DEATH OF A RECORDING ENGINEER

Anonymous Submission

This won't mean anything to most of y'all, but Bill Korecky passed away at the beginning of August.

Bill ran Mars Studios in Cleveland, Ohio. Through the late 1980s and 1990s, he recorded all the records by Cleveland hardcore bands (INTEGRITY, RINGWORM, FACE VALUE, and... more than one band that doesn't deserve to be named), not to mention bands from outside Cleveland like CATHARSIS and UNDYING. He recorded the "Firestorm" EP by EARTH CRSIS. He even fixed the guitar sound on a certain STRIFE record (I include that detail for the benefit of... well, you know who you are).

A lot of the credit for those bands' recordings and the whole 1990s metallic hardcore aesthetic goes to Bill. He wanted everything that came out of Mars to sound fiercer than anything from any other studio.

Bill was an intense person. Working with him, you never had to worry that you would be the only one who cared about the results. Beyond politics or kinship, there is the particular camaraderie of people who are working on a shared project, applying themselves to the limit of their ability. Bill brought that energy to every recording session and insisted on it from every band that recorded with him. If a band was struggling to get a part right, Bill was there, too, working furiously to show you how it was supposed to go, stressing even harder than your bandmates... and making no secret of what he thought of your performance. If he didn't think a band was delivering on their potential, he would forbid them from telling anyone they had recorded at Mars (if memory serves, that may have happened to ENDPOINT).

He recorded plenty of bands with major-label recording contracts, but he set low rates for DIY bands. He was a fucking maniac, and I think he must have liked working with somewhat younger fucking maniacs, if only to tell other maniacs stories about their bad behavior (e.g., the time that the first drummer of INTEGRITY threw a fit by hacking up the studio couch with an axe, all the fistfights that took place in the studio, etc.).

We didn't see eye to eye about... a wide array of things. We're talking about a boomer from Cleveland. Whatever you're imagining as Bill's politics, imagine something weirder and worse. If there's a silver lining here, it is that Bill won't be voting in the next election. But in a way, that only makes it more meaningful that he was willing to work so hard to record penniless bands that were calling for the destruction of the meat industry, or capitalism and the state, or civilization itself.

I remember using a phone dialer at two pay phones to put Bill in touch with a bandmate. This is back when you had to pay by the minute to make long-distance calls, but you could outsmart the system by jerry-rigging a dialer to make the same sound the phone would make when it received coins. I held the two phone receivers up to each other in a 69 position until Bill and my bandmate had worked out the details, stopping to apply the phone dialer on one receiver or the other to keep the lines

MOTOR POWER

K-Town has bike wars, but Fusion has the Fusion cars. Being a large airfield, the Fusion festival site needs to be traversed, to some degree, by motor vehicle. And being privately owned grounds, the festival accepts plenty of donated non-street legal cars that become the the trash trucks, ambulances, delivery vehicles, intra-festival mail carriers, taxis, and other motorized transports of the festival. Each of these vehicles is a graffitied, insane mutant of a car. If you work at the festival, the garage also serves as a DIY bike repair station, and there are ridiculous spectacular tall bikes too.

My favorite Fusion car is the "punk forever" wagon, which has a mohawk of stegosaurus spikes on its roof and a huge "anti-hippie wagon" warning on its back. In a fever dream of acid futures, it's easy to imagine having to defend the Fusion grounds from the swarms of police outside it with a Mad Max style raid, where the Fusion cars serve as our cavalry.

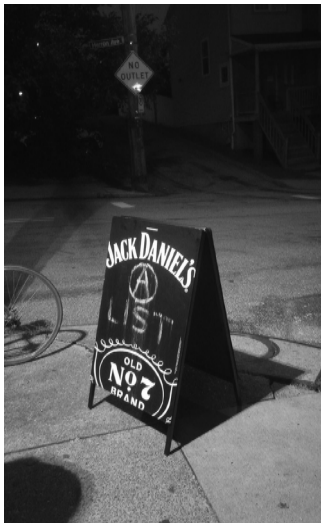
FULL THROTTLE INTO THE FUTURE

2024 was the 25th anniversary of Fusion. The festival was born at the end of the century, at the end of history, the end of the world... but it continues to thrive in the afterworld because it is an underworld. If there is a solidly techno sentiment from Fusion that contrasts with punk sensibilities, it is that there is a future worth seeing. Not no future, our future. A party apocalypse that no punk would want to miss out on.

SKULLFEST 2024 OFFICIAL REPORT

by Corn

I probably should have written this down the minute I was on my way back to Montreal, but let's argue that the high speed blur of bands, friends, merch and exotic gas stations is better hazy and half-remembered. This was my first time attending and my first time in Pittsburgh, but I had been hearing about it for years as most of us have—always considered as the top of DIY punk fests with psycho lineups and generalized chaos throughout. Not to cut suspense in the first paragraph, but it obviously delivered. Here's my thoughts of the shows and bands I saw!



OFFICIAL DISCLAIMER: I didn't get the full fest wristband since I'm broke-adjacent and I knew there would be shows I just couldn't muster the energy for, so there's a lot of stuff I didn't see! I would be shocked if anyone managed to catch every single show (if you did, write in you fucking psycho, talk to me about your diet and stretching routine). Also no band photos, somebody else can do that shit

THURSDAY

Spent most of the day driving down with Kelly and 3/4 of JAVA, uneventful other than the border guard angling for tattoo recommendations and asking if we were "really living the punk lifestyle," whatever that means. Turns out the same guy did the buddy-buddy act and then tore apart WARKRUSHER's van, so fuck him.

As soon as we got into Pittsburgh, it reminded me of interior British Columbia—steep hills, thick forest, loud insects, rotting out buildings and really beautiful signage from the '70s and '80s. As a friend said, it feels like a city that nature is reclaiming. If I was from there, I would be very passionate about it, and that showed with every local I talked to this weekend.

FRIDAY

After an enormous sandwich and a visit to the graveyard (highlights including a Jaws-themed tombstone, goats, woodchucks and two very erotic sphinx statues), I finally got to my first proper show. DEATH GASP played first, but I only caught a song or two—no comment. Then, undersung Portland noise-punk band FRENZY stepped up, two bassists! Can't say I noticed much of a difference but love to that on principle, felt like it could have been louder. Next up was YDI who need no introduction. The response to them was pretty muted, it would have been great to see them on a more hardcore bill, but I know there's a million things that can happen with scheduling. Anyways, the energy was high and theatrical, Jackal told us to smoke angel dust and

SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 22— DESCONTROL PUNK SWAP MEET

Turns out DJing an event with a soundsystem is a whole lot of fucking work. But it pays off. It was an honor to bring the boom in the first free and semi-guerrilla (sidewalk takeover?) punk event of the weekend. Loved the crowd that filled the shop. A Chilean punk with tattooed mohawked studded up dolls, some leather and steel smiths, a punk rug maker, graff, tattoo shit, just a big ass punk street party with endless cool gems to hold and behold. Had there been bands, it would have been a riot. Also, I learned some local LA punk riot history about the 2006 San Bernadino punk riot at British Invasion 2k6 fest. There were fresh tacos and we drank ice cold micheladas on a hot day. Some punks with old ass records shared their shade with us. Sharing!

While we unloaded, every stand I passed had a different little boombox with a cool song on it. I shazzammed some of these songs but at no point did I turn up any artist... what we do is secret. I felt bad drowning out the lots of little speakers, but as I got props and whoozats on the selection the vibes increased. During the golden hour, I made a risky transition to skinhead reggae, and suddenly we got sing alongs, we got boogie woogie, we got rabbithole conversations about LEE SCRATCH PERRY producing SUSAN CADOGAN, we got hoots and hollers from where most of the punks are playing a funny game.

For me, the Descontrol punk swap meet was the high point of the weekend. It was just a little more wild. The fest was fun as fuck, and next year's looks like it will deliver once again with DISORDER, FUCK ON THE BEACH, TAQBIR, INYECCION, and INFEST already announced to play. But legit, whoever is playing, you should just go and hang out being a cool LA punk. If punk taught me anything it's that the good stuff is always on the margins, in the shadows. Enjoy CY, but do the random other cool punk weekend shit that's just punks being punks.

your ticket to a world free of charge...

When we got back to our literature table, which we had abandoned hours ago, we found that ANTISECT had squatted it to sell merch! I hope they sold some of our free zines too, just for a laugh.

We evacuated anything we really cared about from the table and abandoned it to the anarchy of the top floor stage, hoping we'd at least see the table again.

DROPDEAD spoke out against vivisection. Cool. Sitting on the balcony I met this punk who was the right age and location and style to have known my dead friend who coordinated Maximum Rocknroll, and they did. Nice of you to show up, Jen.

DETESTATION closed the night and boy oh mother fucking boy were they the band to do it. First show in a quarter of a century and an absolute class act. The vocalist spoke out from the stage against colonialism, selling punk out, and white supremacy. They were the only band to even recognize the consumption of alcohol, let alone question it, and thanks to their sound check they had the bounciest, locked in mix where every instrument came through clearly and moved you more. Hooray for DETESTATION!

For their encore, DETESTATION played their classic cover of REPUBLIKA's "Não Mais." To aid in maximum singalong, the vocalist brought out two giant cardboard prompter boards with the lyrics. The boards had their intended effect and the final song of CY Fest was an adorable, anti-establishment, hardcore sing along. I wish she had told us to all put our arms around each other or some cheesy shit like that, "nao mais!!!" At the very end of their set, the band threw both boards into the audience. The boards could not have come to two more different ends. One was gently received by an appreciative woman who posed with it alongside smiling friends. The other square of cardboard was wrestled over between two dudes in the pit who tugged it back and forth for so long that they both ended up on the ground...and kept going at it. It was taken by one guy, then wrestled out of his hands, then his friend got in it, next thing you know five security guards came over and stood around like, unsure what to do because they weren't exactly fighting but it was fucking weirding everyone else out like it's just a sign bro? By the time one of them walked out with the sign it was mangled and unrecognizable. Lame, but entertaining!

Although we had succumbed to $15 beers, we never even ate so we rushed out of the theater and beelined it to the Rainbow before the kitchen closed. Weekend in LA!

At some point we also saw BEHIND ENEMY LINES and the VARUKERS, again. I don't recall when this happened.

kill our family, the Freddy Krueger glove was fun too. They ended with an AGNOSTIC FRONT cover which was OK, and we were immediately out the door to run and catch PROTOCOL six blocks away. They probably don't need an introduction either. Furious, relentless, easily one of the best sets of the weekend.

This other venue, Cattivo, was a night and day difference—two long, narrow halls stacked on top of each other, perfect for pits. Also, smoking inside, another Pittsburgh quirk I had heard about, which had me bumming cigs even though I almost never smoke (when in Rome, you know). Remaining upstairs was SCARECROW who were sick but just didn't really grab me, HARAM who were incredible in a smaller room compared to some bigger gigs I've seen them at, I thought it was great when Nader corrected somebody in the crowd's pronunciation of 'inshallah' too. Then there was BLAZING EYE who I decided to skip to catch the downstairs headliner EXTINCTION OF MANKIND. They were extremely tight musically and had the crowd's attention, but I heard two separate people making jokes about the lead singer sounding like he was just going 'ba ba ba ba ba ba ba' through all the songs. After that was the aftershow, where I managed to pay $35 USD to catch two songs of LEBENDEN TOTEN, oh well, got caught slipping. Two days remain...

SATURDAY

Woke up neck stiff on the air mattress, ate a bagel and headed to the matinee. It was in the same spot as the aftershows, a warehouse space that housed a harm reduction group called Prevention Point, always good to see Naloxone freely available where people are partying. Speaking of partying, I missed essentially everyone there with one pointed exception: MUTANT STRAIN, who were one of my favourite bands at Something to Talk About in Philly last year. It was good to see more than the top of Maryssa's head as they jumped around this time, always excited by bands that have more than three parts per song, truly vicious. From there, I hopped in with WARKRUSHER and headed to the other side of town for the evening shows.

It's odd to say, but one of the bands I was most looking forward to seeing was TOTAL NADA from here in Montreal. They've been evolving constantly and tightening into this dark hooky furious thing with punk jumps and one of the best vocalists I've seen, no idea how Boris was able to keep it up while also doing last minute replacement vox for X2000. However, one fateful poppers hit during PHYSIQUE put me into the zone of darkness, and I sadly had to take a breather before re-entering the swamp that was downstairs of Cattivo. BOG PEOPLE was starting soon... one of my favourite bands of that early 2010s era, who honestly made me dig deeper into UK82 and spiky punk shit as I was emerging from my No Idea Records and flannel phase... never thought I'd be able to see them. The set was perfect: cartoonish excess, so much sweat dripping off the walls. Also

Your faithful author abides and imbibes

there was a guy crawling around on stage in a ghillie suit the whole time, which I didn't notice until I got up close to scream "VIOLENCE" over and over again. Just perfect.

Oh, and I missed LEBENDEN TOTEN. Again. I may never recover from this level of being caught slipping.

The aftershow didn't have much going on, basically it was 500 tired and vaguely horny punks drinking in a parking lot while being lightly rained on. There was a set from SWORDWIELDER too, but I don't know anyone who actually saw it. Sat in the gravel for a while and headed back to the porch I was sleeping on.

SUNDAY

Time for total redemption of punk. First thing though, I went and ate a chicken sandwich at Hardee's alone, drank some Liquid IV and recouped my mental state. Then we went to see the semi-secret backyard wrestling show in the woods. Honestly, watching a guy with a red mohawk and an Operation Ivy shirt smash light tubes and staple dollar bills onto another guy's forehead was deeply life-affirming. Just needed to see some blood I guess! After the match there was a set from VICIOUS BLADE, who sounded incredible in the open air, love when the lead singer in a metal punk band does an evil laugh before the breakdown. I wish more people were able to come out to it, but it being a side thing made it special too. Energized by violence and watching a dirt bike do donuts in a field, we hit the matinee.

This was the show I was most looking forward to: total fastcore annihilation. The mood felt very positive in the parking lot compared to the night before, I think the "summer camp is almost over" feeling was taking hold a little. ILLITERATES smashed a cake into the pit, YAMBAG covered both Stiff Little Fingers and Gauze, and INNUENDO played a set on the level of the DIE KREUZEN public access video, total melt. READY ARMED SYSTEM were the biggest surprise for me, overwhelming and totally their own thing, excited to see them again. Outside the show, we had the chance to thank Krystyna for all the work she and the rest of the organizers had done. Honestly, the fact that everything ran smoothly, on time and with what seemed like minimal friction was stunning, there's a reason this fest is considered the gold standard.

I had basically no interest in the night shows (crust and oi isn't really my shit), but a friend convinced me to pop in for one set and I'm so glad I did. NO TIME managed to squeak in one of my favourite sets of the fest just under the wire. Pulling in street punk and NYHC plus insane hooks and presence, N2BM.

There was more stuff after that, of course there was! But it's not worth mentioning, a fire, a fight, some beers etc, I've gone on too long already. Punk life rules, go to Skullfest if you can, shoutout to Kevin and Hilary, bye!

BANDS I WISH I SAW: SURROGATES, THE LOSERS, ARGH, NO KNOCK, FUERA DE SEKTOR, DE RODILLAS, BOOTLICKER

RIXE was where the festigue started to kick in, where all of the loud bass and drums and guitar and shouting starts to sound the same and my back hurts. Went to get beer but a beer was 15 fucking dollars. Fuck Live Nation for real.

PARANOID

Wandered down to the basement and caught PARANOID. Good, but did not wrest me from my slumbergrump.

HABAK heavy. Ugga ugga.

I finally succumbed to the $15 beer prices (not punk. Fuck you Live Nation) to shake the festigue. Ordering took so long that I basically saw all of HELLSHOCK from the bar line. Not the way I'd prefer to see HELLSHOCK, but not the worst way to spend time waiting for the bartender!

Glug glug glug and we're back! (also not punk, kids.)

But you know who IS fucking punk? Mother fucking DEATH SIDE!!!!! Finally, another fucking buttflap in the building! Despite his constant insistence that he does not speak English (a claim that punctuates almost anything he says) the vocalist's broken-english banter captivated the audience almost as much as his band's show, which was world class. "West Coast is wasted coast!" I've seen him fronting his other band, FORWARD, and it was a similar deal, his speeches from the stage sucked any dead air out of the room and launched the crowd into laughter and chant-a-long pogo. Sometimes, I like to imagine him speaking perfect English and having a hardcore routine of vocal exercises and Shakespeare soliloquies before taking the stage and that every slurred, barely intelligible sentence that sounds like he only learned English from crust lyrics is actually the cold, calculated execution of a perfect showman.

Houston, we have a buttflap

SKITSYSTEM followed. Apparently two of them were denied entry at the airport. Fuck borders!!!

Back to the basement for QLOAQA LETAL, a Spanish punk band from the 80s whose singer is still going at it. LA punks were fucking stoked for this band.

proclaiming solidarity with Palestine, migrants, and our furry friends. Cheers to whoever put those up.

The previous day I saw this gloomy ass punk who had a “Sadness Is Rebellion” bag, a “Feel The Darkness” backpatch, and a “DOOM” pin—the next time I saw them was at LIFELESS DARK, go figure.

Left: punks in search of something while LIFELESS DARK speaks out against genocide.

Below: anarcho banners, R.A.M.B.O., RIXE

R.A.M.B.O. had moshpit antics with props and costumes as you would hope from them. Did you know Tony Pointless founded the Birdpunk subculture?

THE PIST were playing in the basement while I caught up with an old pal and sounded way more fucking Oi! than I had remembered but it was GOOD. Like catchy as fuck. Sadly I didn’t get to realize my 13-year-old Napster dream of seeing THE PIST play “Textbook Salvation” because I had to run upstairs for RIXE.

TOTAL NADA USA TOUR SCENE REPORT

By Martin Force

I accompanied Montreal’s TOTAL NADA on their recent US tour as roadie/designated driver. Rather than a tedious “tour journal,” what follows is a compendium of brief scene reports from everywhere we went (to the best of my recollection) as well as some overall impressions from this slice of American punk in it’s current state.

PHILLY

Does Philly really need a report? The show was at the speakeasy/dive bar Cousin Danny’s next to the elevated train line, and I was delighted to learn that Cousin Danny was a real person, the guy who runs the place and was there the whole show. The locals were squeaky-vocals Z-PAK (11pm) and vocal-effects-board hardcore ICD10. Everyone in Philly is really nice and really cool but I will say there was less energetic dancing/crowd movement at this show than elsewhere. Can’t deny it!

MOSHING

So speaking of moshing, people moshed everywhere we went, without exception, and moshed well. There was no negative posturing crowd-killing, and I don’t think a single town had a crowd that stood still the entire show. Maybe this is due to TOTAL NADA’s infectious energy, but I do think there is a very healthy mosh culture across the US right now. I was delighted to see young goth-mall-fur-accessory zoomers two-stepping every time an appropriate drum beat appeared. In fact, there was two-stepping everywhere, all the time. Side-to-side was also popular, either with everyone demonstrating their own particular style/gait/lean, or the entire room going back and forth in unison. Overall, positive, energy moshing everywhere.

NEW BRUNSWICK, NEW JERSEY

This was the only new city for me on the tour. Right now a lot of shows there happen in the parking lot of a Mexican restaurant, where the space and atmosphere are great. Like a generator show but with amenities. The parking lot is taped off, so there’s a big crowd gathered in the lot itself, and the passerbys and looky-loos gathering on the sidewalk. Show-goers ate at the restaurant, which I heard has experienced a business-saving boost in sales thanks to the shows, and their walls are now covered in

band shirts of bands that have played there. New Brunswick is close to New York City, so many people drove in from the city to see the show, which seemed to be regular occurrence. I got the feeling that some NYC people preferred going to shows like this in Jersey over the same bands playing in New York because of the great vibes of the venue (and maybe the shows ending a little earlier). PHANTOM where the hometown headliners, I don't think I need to introduce them but they are proof of one of my rules of hardcore: the drummer makes the band.

PITTSBURGH AND CLEVELAND

I'm lumping these together because both shows ended up being that sort of "combined show" that happens in a smaller city, in the middle of the week, where a band like TOTAL NADA will end up playing a dive bar with the same weird stoner band from West Virginia who's members are having a fight/breaking up two nights in a row. Pittsburgh and Cleveland are both those kinds of places, small and tough cities with relatively small scenes where this happens (Pittsburgh's annual Skull Fest being the exception). But that is not a slight, the punks in these towns both put in the extra effort to build a scene with an outsized impact and to make sure it's always a place worth stopping on tour.

In Pittsburgh we saw "the dumbest band in hardcore" ILLITERATES (LP on Sorry State) who sound like those other Pittsburgh hardcore bands but with the speed turned up to the maximum possible, zero sense of pretention, and I assume dumber lyrics. Excellent band. Cleveland's local band was BIGG EGG and normally I am not really into the whole "egg thing" but in this case it seems like the band is completely egg-themed, with every song being an egg pun or joke (yolk). I have to respect the commitment to the bit. Only in Cleveland.

ST. LOUIS

The St. Louis show was at a spot called Sinkhole, which is funny if you know me personally, but anyways it felt like a DIY show space but I think is actually just run by an individual, who maybe used to/also runs a small label by the same name. So it felt like a DIY space, it was a nice room, with a practice space in the back and decorated by several old Taco Bell signs. The show was small, since raw punk-ish locals KATO (demo on Roachleg Records) had to drop, leaving only JERKING CLASS as the other band. Even if the scene is a little small though, St. Louis is always worth a stop because of the City Museum, which is an attraction that is impossible to describe if you've never been there. A massive former shoelace factory transformed into a low-safety-standards scrap metal playground/art gallery/everything space. Every city should stop investing in stupid gimmick tourist attractions and just found their own City Museums and turn it over to the local community of artists and freaks. Imagine what a Montreal City Museum would be like given our high population of francophone circus punk scrap metal welders.

TEXAS TEENAGERS

We saw a lot of youth coming out to the All Ages shows on the tour, but Dallas and Houston were the peak of seeing under 20-year-olds in the crowd and in the opening bands. I think Dallas and Houston are both sort of off the beaten path for bands, if

and bricks of their newsletter to distribute around the country. Unfortunately neither anarcho-punk table featured buttflaps anywhere in sight.

The venue was a three-floor building with a stage on each floor and multiple staircases, making it a kind of maze to navigate. Each floor had something: the basement floor had the best vibe, the top floor had the best sounding stage on one side of a carpeted entryway and, on the other, the balcony seats overlooking the ground floor auditorium, which had the biggest and busiest moshpit.

I only caught one song of PIG CITY on the big stage but it looked like she had the microphone all the way in her mouth? Whoa. Went back upstairs to tend to the zine table and take it easy before everything got wild. Too late! SOH was on and wild fucking foxy pogo boot in your face punk!!! What is up with three letter punk bands right now? In the past year, I've seen SMT, AFK, was supposed to see DHK but Mexico denied them at customs, and now SOH. Singer told me it stands for Sippin' On Hennessy.

BATSCRATCH was next, our generation's OLD SKULL. Ok, maybe not an apt comparison given that the only 10 year old member of BATSCRATCH is the vocalist, but it was still equal parts adorable and thrilling. The pit around BATSCRATCH was super tender and goofy and seemed to mostly be carried by the singer's cousins or brothers or something? That what it looked like to me.

VERBAL ABUSE were the first band to truly pack the house to the point of latter ripple moshpit vibrations into our table. Nicely done.

SOH, BATSCRATCH, VERBAL ABUSE

LIFELESS DARK were my first basement band and FUCK do I wish I set up our table in the basement! Basement was anarcho lair with fine fabric booths, different levels of banister, behind-stage platform, and understage pit from which to see the band. The house was packed for LIFELESS DARK and it was like there were punks posting up on every available surface that allowed for direct eyesight and ear damage. Not to be missed! The basement also had dope ass anarcho style banners

We hang out so long that we miss both the TEMPLARS show and the pre-fest fest, where I would've liked to see HEZ, GOLPE, RESISTANT CULTURE, and WHO KILLED SPIKEY JACKET. Specifically, if I had seen RESISTANT CULTURE, I would have asked what fucking movie the scenes in their "runaway" music video are from. If you know, e-mail me: podcast@crimethinc.com

Oh well, why not roll back around to the pool hall? Literally APPENDIX again. We groundhoggin'? But this time, with even more rockin' and boppin' in the pit! Hej! Hej! Hej! A decent neo-crust outfit with good musicianship played before them, but I honestly couldn't tell you if it was KIRA or AGE OF FEAR.

The scene at the pool hall was cool as fuck. Punks reconnecting and racking up balls and sharing horror stories just cuz. Everyone was a hot LA punk and me and my girlfriend discussed letting them all run a train on us in the bathroom, however 2 days in LA and still (?!) no other buttflaps in sight! Punk descontento.

I alllmost got to see one artful fucking smooth operator shark some punks at billiards, but the goth DJ had it swirling and swaying so we got on the dance floor until the night ended.

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 21 — CY FEST

We showed up early and grabbed a vendor spot next to a cool punk flag distro. They had like, FRAMTID and DISCHARGE flags. Yeah, flags. Another punk trend prediction for 2025? We were there before doors so we got to see DETESTATION's sound check, which already got me excited for what was to come. Apologies to the homies in PIG CITY for not snapping a shot off when the production dudes rolled your logo behind DETESTATION during sound check.

At our table we gave away free CrimethInc. zines surreptitiously produced at an ex-worker's ex-workplace. We got a lot of compliments and curious customers and got to talk to other cool print-passioned punks like Burn Barrel Press."

CY Fest instagram flyer

Don't Rock the Vote, Vote with Rocks

I took a walk around to check out the other vendors, scored some sick records, found out my friend who drummed for RAMBO wasn't there (miss you love you Dave) and was pleased to encounter not one but TWO other anarchist literature tables: Anarchist Black Cross Federation Los Angeles and DIY ZINE (good luck finding the zine I'm talking about by searching "DIY ZINE" on g00gle.) The DIY ZINE table had bricks

Top left to bottom right: NYC's LOVE AND COMPASSION playing in New Brunswick; The greatest attraction on earth; TOTAL NADA playing a dive bar in Chicago; TOTAL NADA at a squat venue in New Orleans; Locals THE MASK playing a shed in Charlotte, NC; BAD ANXIETY at a squat venue in New Orleans; Birmingham, AL; BORN playing The Firehouse in Birmingham, AL; GUERRA FINAL in Richmond; ABISM playing Latino Punk Fest in NYC.

they even go to Texas they are likely focused on the gig in Austin. And the show in Austin was good, with excellent new local bands like BLOODRITE and AUTOMATED EXECUTION. But Austin is a night-life city, where the whole district is crammed full of music-bars, each with a show or band of some kind every night. The streets are full of young to middle-aged affluent-ish people (tech workers? tourists?) who just bar hop from show to show. So instead of teenagers, the crowd in Austin was a good chunk just normies who walked in off the street "oo look, weirdos playing loud music!" Austin also had less moshing (although props for having not one but TWO radical zine distros tabling the show). All to say that all of Texas rules, and if you go there check out at least two cities besides Austin and you won't be disappointed.

EPHEMERAL VENUES

The aforementioned show in New Brunswick, NJ was the first such show of the tour at one of these emphemeral DIY venues — a space carved out or put together in a pretty temporary way just to have a show. Chicago was meant to be a generator show at a new, untested location but had to be moved at the last minute due to an extreme thunderstorm warning (turned out to the right call, and we were treated to some amazing lightning and electrical anomalies after the show). Even though we got stuck in a tiny dive bar, people still moshed and went off.

The Kansas City show was set up in the middle of a huge, abandoned reservoir in the middle of a park. We heard people had been cracking the spot for shows regularly all summer, each time coming up against a bigger lock to cut... This show may have been the last, since the cops/park rangers showed up at the end, but people already had another location selected for future generator shows. There were some guys

mohawks up all the way for THE VARUKERS in 2024!!! House was packed and hot but it kinda felt like no one gave into the slumped-over-each-other sloshy-moshy sweat pits of my southern punk rock youth. Was hoping for a little more movement, maybe CONFLICT will deliver. Just a small pit for them. However, CONFLICT's new additional vocalist, Fi, fuuucking lets it rip. Bravo! APPENDIX closed out the night even though they weren't on the flyer, officially turning them into the band I've seen most—and on the most coasts—over the past year. Last chance for a dance punks... and there was plenty of boppin' and rockin' along to the old 'PENDIX. "Hej! Hej! Hej!"

For me, what makes an LA show an LA show is the vendor scene out back. We drank beers with a cool ass old vendor who had 40-year-old skinhead photo books for sale and lives in his van. I didn't see their distro until Saturday, but every pool table had a copy of D.I.Y. ZINE ISSUE #2, an excellent Bay Area anarcho-punk newsletter with a 4,000-count print run. My favorite article was the interview with Israeli crust band HOLOCAUSTS. I fucking wish my town had a rag like this. Oh yeah, I live in my van and travel from punk festival to punk festival... punk is my town. Solidarity to all the van punx across the world reading this.

I wish I had caught: TENSO, ANIMALS REVENGE, and FINAL CONFLICT.

FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 20 — PRE-CY FEST AFTER PARTY

Friday had the most shows: the Pre-CY Fest Show, which was a festival of its own right, a CY Fest Presents Oi! show with THE TEMPLARS and RIXE, and a Pre-CY Fest After Party. The multiple similar names made it difficult to describe to cool punks you just met which event you were going to, excited about, or who was playing where or when. But I actually liked the disorienting aspect of too much to see, and I hope the billing chaos extends further next year with a Pre-CY Fest Kick Off After Party Pre-Show and a dozen indistinguishable Post-CY Fest Show After Parties, each with its own dozen of indistinguishable grind bands.

We woke up rough, made up our mugs, and asked each other "whattya wanna?"

"Descontrol."

Back in Descontrol and this time...we didn't escape. It's too good. It's too fucking good there. You're Aladdin in the Cave of Wonders but made out of old porn, motorcycles, studs and spikes and a cool cat you haven't seen in a minute who drops off a few copies of the ELECTROCUTAME ZINE COMPILATION TAPE, a benefit for CHICXS ROCK-ERXS, an inclusive girls rock summer camp in southeast LA.

CY FEST 2024 REPORTBACK

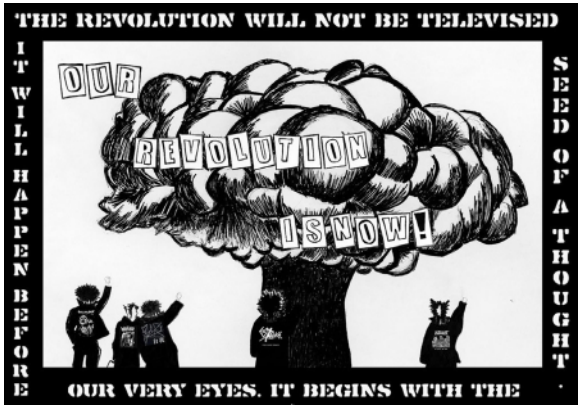
by Crimethinc. Ex-Workers Collective

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 19 — CY FEST KICK OFF SHOW

We rolled into LA like the Beverly Hillbillies: our whole life upon the wagon: sustenance, wardrobe, equipment, furniture, and even another vehicle for local transport—not to mention not one, but TWO recently stitched buttflaps. On the way up we discovered THE TOASTERS' "Weekend In LA" track, which became our anthem for the trip. "How will you check me later if you don't dig me now?"

We slept at two different apartments over the coming days, and even had a third we could have fallen back on, but our first stop became our true home for the weekend: Descontrol punk shop, an establishment that earns the name. Within the dusty, leather-laden walls of this dank smoke dungeon we found a world where time receded, punks relaxed, and rockers reached out from punks' past to remind you: "I too recorded a fucking demo once and it's better than your pretty record store day 180 gram collectable special pressing you pretentious pus-ey pisshead fuck!"

A siiiiick ass international exhibition curated by Mala Influencia and Osiris Ramirez was on display when we walked into the shop, with gorgeous, large, screenprinted posters from all over the world—at least four continents—and well-balanced on the dis-cartesian plane formed by the chain to egg and anarcho to chaos axes.


THE REVOLUTION WILL NOT BE TELEVISED
IT WILL HAPPEN BEFORE
OUR REVOLUTION IS NOW!
SEED OF A THOUGHT
OUR VERY EYES. IT BEGINS WITH THE

After finally unloading all our DJ equipment for the weekend, we somehow grasped ourselves out of dungeon Descontrol and puttered over to First Street Pool & Billiard Parlor for the CY Fest kick off show. This spot seems to have shows often—including LEFTÖVER CRACK just under a month prior *WHY DIDN'T ONE OF YOU FUX TELL ME*—in case you're in LA someday, which, legit, not a bad idea... LA is mad punk if you can swing.

I can't really explain it—that would take too long and compromise the privacy of others—but I'm not lying when I say that my buttflap got us into a completely sold out and PACKED AF show. Turns out a good buttflap can get you far in this town. Buttflap comeback and total DISCHARGE font homogeny punk trend predictions for 2025 lfg lock it in. Speaking of DISCHARGE, THE VARUKERS were about halfway through their set by the time we stepped through the door. That fucking singer is a mad man! Two

making and selling tacos (and flinging tortillas into the crowd), an anarchist zine distro, and someone just dropped off a huge box of "FREE FIREWORKS" which were lit off continuously whenever a band was playing. No other show on the tour had the chaotic and autonomous vibe of Kansas City and the crew there seemed pretty dedicated to making that the standard for every show there.

New Orleans brought this vibe to the urban core with a proper squat show at a location in the downtown "Central Business District" cracked and prepared well in advance. The show was extremely well organized and well attended, enough so that they were raising money for a local cause alongside paying the bands plenty in gas money. Even the organizers seems surprised at how many people came out, including teenagers who had to leave early to catch their train home.

The tour was book-ended with time in NYC where we heard about the current scene of squat shows there (although sadly didn't get to attend one). See the scene report from the Logout crew a few pages back for more info on that. It requires a bit of work, planning, and a shift in how people think about and treat attending a show but maybe it's something you can try in your town too! It was really inspiring and exciting to see people in so many different places experimenting and pushing the boundaries to create spaces for punk shows.

Continuing along this "ephemeral venues" section, Charlotte was in a shed, which I gathered might be planning to host more shows. North Carolina is one of my favourite places to go. Amazing local bands, friendly people, shows are always at a house/shed/warehouse/something and there's a higher proportion of cool straight edge punks than anywhere else.

HATTIESBURG

Hattiesburg is down at the bottom of Mississippi, only two hours from New Orleans, so there is come cross-pollination between cities. BAD ANXIETY from Hattiesburg came down and played the New Orleans show, and some friends in New Orleans drove up to catch the Hattiesburg show the next day.

Hattiesburg is a special place, like so many other smaller, overlooked cities in America you can find a extremely dedicated and cool punk scene. We drove to Hattiesburg a bit early so Hampton of BAD ANXIETY could tape a live TOTAL NADA "Dog City Sessions" set in his VHS-wired-up basement. Dog City Sessions seems to be ramping up in activity on Hampton's YouTube channel, with DEFLUO CERVUS and FUERA DE SEKTOR also recently stopping by, alongside a steady stream and archive of VHS-recorded live shows.

The show in Hattiesburg was at The Spectrum Center, which is a house-turned-LGBT-outreach center. All ages house show vibes. CITRUS played their first set

alongside DRAFT DODGER who are definitely in high school and have two guitars and no bass. No notes.

BIRMINGHAM

Birmingham, Alabama is like Hattiesburg, another small and overlooked but extremely powerful scene. The show was at The Firehouse which is a community space dedicated to DIY and teaching music. It's been around for at least 10 years and is an actual old firehouse with a big show space in the back. TOTAL NADA played sandwiched in between locals BORN and ACUTE EFFECT (I think their first show), both in the top of the bands I saw on this trip. Being a middle-of-the-week show, the turnout wasn't great, but we were treated to an entire room of side-to-side.

RICHMOND

Richmond was sadly at a boring bar, and suffered due to numerous other shows the same night. Patrick from DESTRUCT is booking a lot of the shows there right now, and usually shows happen at a cool warehouse space with much better vibes. However, all this working against the show could not stop it from being a success because of the sheer quality of bands playing—GUERRA FINAL, ULTIMATE DISASTER and CAS-CARA

NEW YORK CITY

NYC had an outsized presence on this tour, being at both ends of the tour, with some days off for me there on either end. Similar to the city's outsized presence on punk in general? But the squat-energy happening there right now is truly inspiring, alongside new bands like LOVE AND COMPASSION and many others I have yet to see. The end of the tour was Latino Punk Fest, which deserves and entire report back all to itself. I can't do it justice, but I will mention ABISM who's set I really enjoyed.

ABISM

THE NOT,
BIG LAUGH,
ZEAL,
EXTENSIVE
SLAUGHTER.

photos & art by Slim